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plurality of metal oxide needles extending upwardly of the upper surface of the substrate, with their respective central axes arranged substantially in parallel with each other, wherein the metal oxide needles have a specific weighted average circle-based diameter and a specific weighted average aspect ratio, and wherein the metal oxide needles are present at a specific density at the upper surface of the substrate. The present invention is also concerned with a method for producing the above-mentioned functional element. The functional element of the present invention has an advantage in that, although the metal oxide structure therein comprised of the needles has a very large surface area, the metal oxide structure has a very small thickness. Therefore, the functional element of the present invention can be very advantageously used as a component for an electric, an electronic or an optical device.--

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Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 14, line 8 with the following rewritten paragraph:

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--7. The functional element according to item 1 above, which is a laser emission element for use in an optical device.--